

North Avenue revitalization a goal in Oak Park, Chicago

 chicagotribune.com/suburbs/oak-park/news/ct-oak-north-avenue-grant-tl-1026-20171023-story.html

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The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning has identified Oak Park and Chicago's North Avenue District as one of its redevelopment project areas.

According to a CMAP news release, the district is one of 34 new projects chosen by the agency for support through its local technical assistance program.

The project is expected to be a collaboration between Chicago and Oak Park to create an economic development and land-use plan for North Avenue between Austin Boulevard and Harlem Avenue.

Oak Park resident Judith Alexander, who serves as chair of The North Avenue District, helped submit the application with representatives from Chicago's 29th Ward, the Oak Park Economic Development Corporation and the 29th Ward Economic Development Committee.

"The North Avenue District is honored and delighted that CMAP has chosen our proposed redevelopment land-use plan as one of the projects it will assist," said Alexander. "We look forward to working on the project with CMAP, the city of Chicago and the village of Oak Park. We also hope to involve district businesses and the residents of Galewood and north Oak Park."

According to Alexander, the goal of the plan is to revitalize the North Avenue corridor in a way similar to Roosevelt Road on the border of Oak Park and Berwyn.

"Our objective for the plan is to provide a roadmap for that revitalization," Alexander said. "The next step will be a meeting with CMAP, The North Avenue District, Oak Park and the 29th Ward to work out the scope of the project, who will do what and timing. We hope to begin work in the first quarter of 2018."

In addition to land-use recommendations, the plan is expected to provide the basis for a more unified look and feel to the roadway, officials said. The plan is also expected to provide guidance on potential financial incentives to attract development, and will inform an upcoming transportation study by the Chicago Department of Transportation.

"The ward's economic development is one of my top priorities," 29th Ward Alderman Chris Taliaferro said in a statement. "Planning is often necessary for commercial districts like North Avenue, where my office is located."

According to CMAP, the local technical assistance program was established in 2010 with a \$4.5 million US Department of Housing and Urban Development grant, which expired in 2014.

Since then, the program has been supported by the U.S. Department of Transportation, U.S.

Economic Development Administration, the Illinois Attorney General, Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, the Chicago Community Trust, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and Cook County.

More information about the program is available at www.cmap.illinois.gov/programs-and-resources/lti.

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